

CODE
6
COMICS

ISSUE 7

SEPT 2003

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BRIAN PULIDO'S

Lady Death

A
MEDIEVAL
TALE



crossgen.com

Brian Pulido

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Ted Pertzbom

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THUS FAR IN LADY DEATH

Amidst a harrowing battle between warrior knights and the otherworldly Eldritch, a child is conceived. Blood of both clans, she belongs to neither. Years later, the child, Hope, is reborn as Lady Death.

Lady Death returns to Novgorod in pursuit of Henry, her mother's murderer. Her vengeance is interrupted when Wolfram von Bach arrives, chased by his brother Cai and the Scarlet Riders, both in service to the corrupt Archbishop von Krakhauer and charged with capturing and executing the half-Eldritch woman and the knight who protects her.

Their battle is stopped short when an Eldritch hunting party, led by Thorm Gara, lays siege to the village. Lady Death bests Thorm in single combat, but Novgorod is left in ruins...



Wolf



Thorm



Cai

NOVGOROD.
1225 AD.

THERE'S
SO MANY
WOUNDED...

HOW
CAN WE
HELP THEM
ALL?





WE HELP
ONE PERSON
AT A TIME,
HOPE.
BRING
THEM IN
HERE.

WE MAY
HAVE WON
THE BATTLE,
BUT I FEAR
NOVGOROD
IS LOST.

IT
SMELLS,
AUNTIE
HOPE.
COVER
YOUR NOSE,
ISABELLE.











THE
SCARLET
RIDERS!

QUICK!
GET BEHIND
ME!

READY
YOUR
BLADE!

SHINING

SHRANG

PEACE, MIGHTY
WARRIOR

WE WILL NO LONGER
OPPOSE YOU.

TO DO SO WOULD
BE DISHONORABLE.

WE'VE
BEEN GONE
FROM OUR LANDS
TOO LONG, AND WE
FIND THE WEST...
COMPLICATED.
IT IS BEST
WE GO.

WHEN NEXT WE MEET, PERHAPS IT WILL BE AS ALLIES!

THAT'S A PLEASANT TURNAROUND. SO WHERE DO WE STAND, BROTHER?

I TAKE ISSUE WITH YOUR METHODS, BUT I CANNOT DISPUTE WHAT HAPPENED HERE. YOUR PROTEGE SAVED NOVGOROD.

I AM RETURNING TO THE CAPITAL. I'LL TROUBLE THE TWO OF YOU NO FURTHER.

I DON'T AGREE WITH YOUR WAYS, EITHER. MOTHER WOULD BE DISPLEASED AT THE WAY YOU SERVE GOD. MAY HE REST HER SOUL.

BUT I'VE HAD ENOUGH FIGHTING BETWEEN US.

WHAT WILL YOU TELL THE ARCHBISHOP?

THE TRUTH - YOUR DEMON FIGHTS FOR GOD.





Lady Death!



GLAROND.





THORM GARA, I CAME TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SONS HAVE RETURNED FROM THE FIFTH CYCLE OF LUNAR ENCHANTMENTS. THEY WILL BE READY FOR PRESENTATION TO YOU SHORTLY.

OH.

DO YOU--FEEL PAIN?

HOW CAN I LEAD OUR PEOPLE SCARRED BY THE MOST HATED SYMBOL OF OUR ENEMY?!

LET ME AID YOU. THIS WILL MAKE IT DISAPPEAR.

BUT THIS HEINOS DEED SHALL NOT GO UNPUNISHED!

I SHALL RALLY THE ELDritch AND PREPARE FOR FULL-SCALE WAR!

THORM GARA



ROGER,
STEW'S
READY...COME
FILL YOUR
BELLY!

BE
RIGHT
THERE,
PET.

SAN GIROLAMO
VII

ONYAAAH!

ON SECOND
THOUGHT, I'M
NOT SO HUNGRY
ANYMORE...

AAAARRRR

CHRRNNCK

NOW, THEN.
THAT PROBLEM'S
DONE WITH.
LET'S GET
DOWN TO THE
LORD'S BUSINESS,
SHALL WE--?

"--HOW TO RID
THE WORLD OF
THOSE
ELDRITCH!"

I HATE
THORM FOR
WHAT HE'S
DONE TO
FATHER!

DO NOT
SPEAK LIKE THAT,
CAPRICE. THORM
GARA IS OUR KING--
IT IS HERESY!

MY FATHER, THE
RIGHTFUL RULER
OF AGLAROND, IS
ROTTING IN A WELF
HOLE BECAUSE
OF THAT MAN!

THE NOBLES SAY THAT
TVARUS IS IMPRISONED
BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE OF
HUMANITY. HE IS SOFT AND
UNFIT TO LEAD US INTO
THE FUTURE.

WHO
DARES SPEAK TO
ME THUS!

CAPRICE,
PLEASE--

TARAN.
YOU'VE
RETURNED

WHY
HAVE YOU BEEN
AVOIDING ME?
DON'T YOU CARE
ABOUT US?

DID YOU--
DID YOU DO
WELL IN YOUR
BATTLE?

I DID.
MANY HUMANS
DIED BY MY
SWORD.

HOW NICE.
WHILE YOU
PLAYED AT WAR,
MY FATHER MAY
HAVE SUFFERED
A THOUSAND
CENTURIES OF
WAITING!



I'M SO LONELY WITHOUT MY FATHER, TARAN.

HE CARED FOR THE PAST IN A WAY NONE OF US DO. HIS STORIES WERE SO WARMING-- IT WAS AS IF HE WERE SOMETHING MORE THAN ELDritch-- AS IF HE HAD A SOUL.

CAPRICE! DON'T SPEAK THAT WAY! WHAT HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU?

TALK OF SOULS IS FOR THE HUMANS, NOT ELDritch. THEY ARE WEAK, PATHETIC LITTLE BEINGS. THE ELDritch ARE THE WARRIORs WHO WILL DESTROY THEM!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--

FATHER HAD GRACE-- THORM GARA DOES NOT, AND WE ELDritch ARE ALSO CREATURES OF BEAUTY.

YOU'LL REGRET THORM'S RULE, YOU'LL SEE.

HE DOESN'T HAVE AN ELEGANT BONE IN HIS BODY.

YOU CAN'T TURN A BLIND EYE TO TVARUS' FAULTS-- YOUR FATHER AND A HUMAN CONSORT CREATED A HYBRID!

THORM GARA DID THE RIGHT THING IN EXPOSING YOUR FATHER!

I SAW HER. SHE DEFEATED THORM GARA IN SINGLE COMBAT! SHE CARRIED A DAGGER OF YOUR FATHER'S DESIGN!

SHE IS STRONGER THAN EITHER HUMAN OR ELDritch AND SHE WITHSTANDS THE TOUCH OF COLD IRON!

NO! I'M DONE WITH YOU TARAN!



DUST.



THE
MAN HAD NO
WILLPOWER. NO
DISCIPLINE.

ALL
THAT WILL
CHANGE
NOW.



BISHOP VITTORIO, TO WHAT DO WE OWE
THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY?

THE POPE HAS SENT
ME. THE SHEER AMOUNT OF
ELDRITCH ACTIVITY IN THE AREA
DEMANDS LEADERSHIP WITH A
MORE MILITARY BENT.



-AND
HELMUT VON
KRAKHAUER?

HE'S BEEN
DISPOSED OF. DO
YOU TAKE ISSUE
WITH THAT?

I
NO.

WONDERFUL.
I'VE HEARD SUCH
GOOD THINGS
ABOUT YOU, CAI.



SIR, I'VE JUST RETURNED
FROM NOVGOROD WHERE
WE DID BATTLE WITH
ELDRITCH.

I HEARD
YOU TRAPPED
ONE IN THESE
VERY HALLS. DID
YOU KILL IT?

NOT PRECISELY,
SIR. IT IS A WOMAN.
SHE IS HALF-HUMAN AND
HALF-ELDRITCH. SHE USED
HER ELDRITCH WILES
TO ESCAPE...

...THEN
SHE WON THE BATTLE OF
NOVGOROD...FOR OUR SIDE.



"WOLF, WHEN YOU FORGED BLACKHEART, WHY DID YOU SACRIFICE YOUR OWN BLADE IN MAKING MY SWORD?"



DON'T IMPOSE,
ISABELLE.

YOUR
AUNT MUST BE
EXHAUSTED.

IT'S NO
IMPOSITION.
I'D LOVE TO
HAVE HER
COMPANY.

YAAAY!

GOOD
NIGHT, WOLF.
WOLF?

Zzzzz





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CREATOR QUIZ

ON THE LAM

By Ian M. Feller

Asked by Bugaboo: **Does the conflict in the beginning of SOLUS #1 take place before Charon is cast into Negation Space?**

Barbara Kesel: "Nope. Issue #9 of SOLUS will shed a little more light on that battle."

Asked by Taltos: **Will Monchito from Negation ever get the spotlight or must he remain the plucky-yet-mysterious background character that we've grown to love?**

Tony Bedard: "Monchito will remain plucky-but-mysterious. Unless I change my mind."

Asked by Insanity: **Whose idea was it to name Altwaal's other identity Ayden? I happened to notice last night that Ayden was hiding on Quin. Now I know this is not a big revelation. But my other question is...is this a tribute to actor Aidan Quinn, or just a coincidence?**

Ron Marz: "The honest answer is, I did get 'Ayden' from Aidan Quinn, because Aidan Quinn had a house in the area when I lived in upstate New York, and I always thought it was a cool name. And just as honestly, the 'Ayden Quin' thing was pure happenstance. I didn't realize it when I came up with both names. Maybe a Freudian slip?"

CROSSCURRENTS

By Gina M. Villa

Even though it'll be almost Fall when you all read this, the end of Spring brought a lot of creative changes to the studio. Must've been something in the air that contributed to an urge for new beginnings. Or maybe it has something to do with the fact that folks sometimes have a need to stretch their wings and look around for new challenges — especially in our business. Whatever the reason, it's been a little like musical chairs around here as we shuffle people to projects that will not only be great for the books involved, but also get the creative juices flowing at full throttle. Everybody I've spoken to is really psyched by his (or her) new opportunity, and that's always a harbinger of great things on the horizon. It may be hard for you to believe, given how good these "guys" have been before, but I just know that we can all look forward to seeing even better things to come.

Firstly, Ian Edginton, fresh from his debut on SOJOURN, is taking the writing helm of SCION beginning with Luke Ross' first issue, #40. This will be one of our Key Issues, so if you know of anyone who hasn't yet jumped aboard the SCION bandwagon (I know...another thing that's hard to believe!) this is their perfect opportunity. On the colorist front, to take advantage of his Fine Arts training and painting background, we'll be seeing Nick Bell

working over Steve Epting's art on our new pirate launch, EL CAZADOR. James Rochelle will be picking up ROUTE 666, trading the weird environment of NEGATION for the equally weird, but different, environment of our popular horror book. Eisner-winner Laura Martin will lend her considerable talents to NEGATION, leaving RUSE to Frank D'Armata, her hand-picked successor, where he'll get a chance to strut his stuff for a whole different audience. Everyone is already hard at work on their new babies, so you'll be seeing the fruits of their labor before you know it! Jim Cheung and Ian Edginton are working together on Jim's next project after SCION, which will be a dark fantasy. More details will be forthcoming as things are finalized. And finally, we say goodbye to our own Steve

McNiven as he turns his hand to drawing the super-heroes he grew up with. I've had a special interest and rapport with my fellow ex-teacher ever since he joined us way back in January of 2000. Steve was our first associate penciler and it's been my pleasure to watch his progress as he's become one of the best young artists on the scene today. I wish him the best as he tests the waters outside CrossGen, and look forward to the time when I'll be working with him again.

Last month I mentioned that I hoped to announce the next Code 6 project in this month's column. Well, I'm happy to say that I can. It's called ABADAZAD. Scheduled for a December release, ABADAZAD is created and written by J.M. DeMatteis (*Moonshadow, Spider-Man*) and features art by legend Mike Ploog (*The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus, The Monster of Frankenstein, Man-Thing, Ghost Rider, Weirdworld*). Yes, I did say Mike Ploog. Mike is coming out of his retirement from drawing comics to do this project — he's that enthusiastic about it. And any time a legend the likes of Mike Ploog is excited about a project, you have to stand up and take notice.

ABADAZAD is a contemporary fantasy that will appeal to both adults and children who are fans of *Oz, The Chronicles of Narnia* or *Harry Potter*. J.M. has long dreamed of writing this story and it's already showing in the work he's submitted. The story is at the same time funny, touching, and exciting. This will be a comic that you'll want to read, then save for your children. As J.M. put it in his original pitch, this is the type of comic that he can read with his eight-year-old daughter.

Beginning in present day, the story focuses on Kate, a teenage girl riddled with guilt over the disappearance of her brother five years prior. It then moves through the imaginary world of Abadazad, filled with rich characters and fantastic settings, where Kate learns the key to finding and rescuing the one thing she holds most dear. I won't say any more for fear of spoiling it for everyone. Trust me, if you cherish good stories, you'll love ABADAZAD. I personally can't wait for this bad boy to get started.

This month marks the release of two super-cool CGE titles. Coming from MVCreations is DRAGON'S LAIR and SPACE ACE, both based on the video games of amazing animator Don Bluth. Both feature art reminiscent of that seen in the hit video games from the '80s, and feature stories that, if you remember the games, will take you back to your youth. If you don't know these games, you'll love the comics for their fast-paced action and humor. MVCreations produces incredible work, as seen in their hit MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE trade paperback that's available now, and they don't let up in these titles. Actually, I think these comics get even better. Look for them.

Here are some quick bits on titles to keep an eye out for. Out this month is JONN CARPENTER'S SNAKE PLISSKEN CHRONICLES #2. The first issue was a huge hit, selling out around the country and garnering the attention of *Entertainment Weekly, The Washington Times, Starlog* and the national media. In September, the first Traveler-sized trade for THE CROSSOVERS will be released. If you haven't been reading this series, this affordable package is your chance to see why comics writer Peter David likes this title. It includes a great sketchbook filled with the original designs for the characters in THE CROSSOVERS. That alone is worth the price. Then in October, be on the lookout for MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE: NE-MAN AND THE RISE OF THE SNAKE MEN #1, the first issue of a three-issue mini-series that spotlights characters that will soon become a major part of the Ne-Man cartoon mythos. See it here first!



Reads

Recommended Good Read

by CrossGen Toy Technical Manager,
Adam Vanwickler

Wildcats Version 3.0, published by Wildstorm

By Joe Casey, Dustin Nguyen, and Richard Friend
*suggested for Mature Readers

READ THIS!

Who would've thought that a former Spandex-clad, X-Men clone super-team would make a great book if you ditch all but two of the original characters and turn the book into a commentary on modern corporations? Well, Joe Casey certainly did, and his writing on the book is at top form. The art by Dustin Nguyen blends a great sense of realism mixed with the fantastic. The book takes former android team leader Spartan (now Jack Marlowe) and makes him the head of Hale Inc., a corporation that hopes to change the world. One of its products for consumers is a battery that never dies. Obviously, this doesn't go down well with the rest of the corporate world, and it's up to Cole Cash (Grifter) to take care of all the corporate "dirty work." This book is a great read; I can't recommend it more. Just be warned that it's much more graphic in art and language than CrossGen fare.

MATTHEW SMITH

1. What do you do for CGE?

I am the penciler on THE PATH.

2. Tell us about the project.

It's a samurai epic about a monk — Obo-san — who lost his belief in the gods when he saw them kill his brother. And if that's not enough, Obo-San's trying to overthrow the Emperor, who seems to have been possessed by some evil force. It's what we call a "feel-good" kind of book.

3. Favorite comics you read?

100 Bullets, The Marquis, The Wretch, Alias, and pretty much anything by Guy Davis, Paul Grist, or Sean Phillips.

4. Favorite ice cream flavor?

Any flavor covered in caramel sauce and whipped cream.

5. What type of car do you drive?

Until they make a Kharman Ghia that I can fit into, I'm forced to drive a Honda Accord.

6. Craziest convention experience?

Being cornered by a group of female Starman fans dressed as Klingons.

7. Caffeine or decaf?

What is this "decaf" you speak of?

8. ESPN or CNN?

BBC America, that is.

9. Hobbies?

I read a lot, play the guitar, bite the heads off live chickens, and write.

10. Last good book you read?

A Doc Savage book called "The Deadly Dwarf." Before that was John LeCarre's "The Honourable Schoolboy," which was pretty good despite the disappointing lack of angry short people.

11. Favorite movie?

Terry Gilliam's "Brazil" is a personal favorite, but it's tied with "The Professional" and "Jaws" as the best movie of all time.

12. Influences on your work?

Guy Davis, Chris Bachalo, Eduardo Risso, Mark Chiarello, Kevin Nowlan, and Mike Mignola, as well as illustrators like J.C. Leyendecker and Walter Baumholler.

13. Where are you originally from?

I was born in San Francisco, but we moved around a lot when I was a kid. I've spent most of my adult life in Los Angeles and Albany, NY.

14. If you could invite any four people to dinner, who would they be?

British screenwriter Dennis Potter, magician James Randi, Doc Savage author Lester Dent, and someone really rich to pay the bill.

15. Music you listen to while you work?

I mainly listen to books on tape, but I've been known to slip a Go-Go's CD in from time to time.

16. Leave us with some words of wisdom.

If someone ever says "this milk smells funny," don't taste it for them.

